

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Monitoring**

**District:** Greater Brunswick Charter School

**County:** Middlesex

**Monitoring Dates:** February 4-5, 2003

**Monitoring Team:** Barbara J. Tucker, Michelle Davis and Dorothenia Boyd-Jackson,  
Donna Best

***Background Information:***

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Greater Brunswick Charter School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Greater Brunswick Charter School with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- The protection of procedural safeguards for students and their families;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and,
- The organization and delivery of programs and services resulting in positive student outcomes.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The Greater Brunswick Charter School developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) held a focus group meeting for parents and community members at the Greater Brunswick Charter School on January 23, 2003. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site visit, the NJDOE team reviewed district documents, including district policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, related service personnel, and other relevant information, including a representative sample of student records. Interviews were conducted with the charter school's special education administrator, building principal, general education and special education teachers, speech/language therapist and child study team members.

**District Strengths:**

**Middle School Media Course** – The charter school has begun a new middle school media course in conjunction with the Rutgers University Media Department. The program is aimed at providing students with experiences to refine thinking skills. The

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course provides students with skills that enable them to analyze advertising and media programming to identify viewpoints and pertinent information. The course also emphasizes character building and self-esteem.

### ***Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:***

**Statewide Assessment and Programs and Services** were determined to be areas of compliance by the charter school during self-assessment and by the Office of Special Education Programs during the on-site visit.

### **Section I: General Provisions**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of policies/procedures to the county office, in-service training needs of professional and paraprofessional staff and dissemination of IDEA information. The charter school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

### **Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day/year and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of procedures to check hearing aids and extended school year. The charter school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. The charter school further identified a concern in the area of transfer procedures. **The charter school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.** The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding the provision/duration of programs, duration/location for speech/language services, measurable goals and objectives for related services and facilities. The county office has been notified of the facility issue.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Provision/Duration of Programs** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through staff interviews, review of teacher and student schedules and IEPs that students are not receiving the in-class support program required by their IEPs and/or the resource program for the duration stipulated in their IEPs because the school lacks sufficient staff.

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- **The charter school will immediately provide the resource center programs required by IEPs. The charter school will also develop procedures to ensure that programs are provided as required by student IEPs from this point forward. The plan must further include a mechanism to how the school will obtain the additional staff members that are needed to fully implement IEPs. Additionally, the charter school must identify the manner in which it will provide compensatory services to those students who did not receive the programs and services they were entitled to receive.**

**Duration/Location of Speech/Language Services-** During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the duration/location of speech and language services are not consistently documented in IEPs.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the duration and location of speech and language services are consistently documented in' IEPs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

**Measurable Goals and Objectives for Related Services -** During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that IEPs do not consistently include measurable goals and objectives for related services.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the school develops measurable goals and objectives for related services and includes them in IEPs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

### ***Section III: Procedural Safeguards***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of interpreters at meeting, consent and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of selection and training of surrogate parents, independent evaluations, provision of written notice within 15-days and content/components of notice. The charter school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. The charter school also identified concerns in the areas of addressing written parental requests and documentation of the provision of the short procedural safeguards statement and the special education code. **The charter school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lack procedures, in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component bring about the require changes.** The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding consent, due process and notices of meetings in native language.

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### Area(s) of Need:

**Consent/Due Process** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through staff interviews that in situations when parents refuse to consent when it is determined a student requires an initial evaluation, the charter school does not recommend other actions that may be taken to address the student's needs nor does it pursue due process.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when a parent refuses to consent to an initial evaluation, the charter school recommends other actions to address identified needs or requests due process in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A: 14-2.7(b). The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

**Notices of Meetings in Native Language** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews with staff that for parents who speak a language other than English, the charter school does not provide notices in the native language.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure parents are provided with notices in their native language, when feasible.**

### *Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification*

#### Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of direct referrals from parents and staff, health summary, referral process/pre-referral interventions and identification meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of identification meetings and audiometric and visual/hearing screenings. The charter school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding child find outreach activities and identification meeting timelines.

### Area(s) of Need:

**Child Find Outreach Activities** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the charter school does not conduct child find outreach activities to locate, identify and refer potentially disabled students within the school.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that child find activities are sufficient to locate, identify and refer potentially disabled students within the school.**

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**Identification Meeting Timeline** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that because the charter school does not document the date of referral, it could not be verified that they are complying with timelines for identification meetings.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that each referral is date stamped to further ensure identification meetings are convened within 20-days of receiving the referral. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

### **Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of standardized assessments, bilingual evaluation, multi-disciplinary evaluations and nature and scope of evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified a concern in the area of functional assessments. The charter school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding dated reports, and acceptance/rejection of reports.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Dated Reports** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that evaluation reports are not dated. As such, it cannot be determined when these reports were developed.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that evaluation reports are dated. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Acceptance/Rejection of Reports** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review and interviews with staff that outside reports are not reviewed to determine whether the school should accept or reject them

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the charter school conducts a review of reports and documents the acceptance/rejection of the entire report or assessment, or any part of the report or assessment. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

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### **Section VI:   Reevaluation**

#### **Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of reevaluation planning meetings/participants and 3-year reevaluation timelines for students eligible for speech/language services.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding 3-year reevaluation timelines for students eligible for special education and related services and declassification procedures.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Reevaluation Timelines** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the charter school does not complete reevaluations within the three-year timeline.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that re-evaluations are completed within three-years of the previous classification. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

**Declassification Procedures** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through staff interviews and record review that the speech/language therapist does not conduct a reevaluation to determine whether speech services should be terminated.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure a reevaluation planning meeting is conducted to determine what additional information, if any, is needed prior to a change in eligibility. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

### **Section VII:   Eligibility**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of criteria for specific learning disability (SLD) and eligibility meeting/participants.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified concerns in the areas of screenings in lieu of testing to determine eligibility for speech/language services and the provision of copies of evaluation reports to parents 10 days prior to the eligibility conference. **The charter school's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lack procedures, in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component bring about the require changes.** The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

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Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding the statement of eligibility for SLD and signatures of agreement/disagreement.

### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Statement of Eligibility for** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the eligibility statement for specific learning disability does not indicate that the term specific learning disability does not apply to students who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, general cognitive deficits, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

- **The charter school will revise their eligibility statement for specific learning disability to include all required components.**

**Agreement/Disagreement with Eligibility** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the charter school does not document agreement/disagreement with eligibility determinations.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that participants at eligibility meetings document their agreement or disagreement with eligibility determinations. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

### ***Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEPs to parents, present levels of educational performance, implementation dates, teacher access, annual review timelines for students eligible for speech/language services, 90-day timelines and alignment of goals and objectives with core curriculum content standards.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified a concern in the area of teacher responsibility for implementing the IEP. **The charter school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.** The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding annual review timelines for students eligible for special education and related services and speech/language IEP considerations/required statements.

### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Annual Review Timelines** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the annual reviews for students eligible for special education and related services are not conducted within the twelve-month required timeline.

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- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that annual reviews for students eligible for special education and related services are conducted within the required timelines. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Speech/Language IEP Considerations/Required Statements** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that speech/language IEPs do not contain all of the required considerations and statements.

- **The charter school will revise its IEP format to ensure that the required considerations and statements are included. It is recommended that the charter school adopt the model speech/language IEP developed by the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.**

### ***Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the decision-making process/continuum of programs.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Decision-Making Process/Continuum of Programs** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews and record reviews that the child study team does not consider placement in regular education programs with supplementary aids and services because the charter school only offers pull-out resource services.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that placement is based on the individual needs of the student rather than the availability of programs at the charter school. The plan must include a needs assessment to determine the types of programs that need to be created as well as a mechanism to determine the need for additional staff members.**

### ***Section X: Transition to Post-School***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of student invitation.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the Transition Service Needs Statement.



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**Area(s) of Need:**

**Transition Service Needs Statement** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that for students transitioning into high school the Transition Service Needs Statement is not included in the IEP.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the Statement of Needed Transition Services is completed for students who will transition into high school during the course of that IEP. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Section X: Transition to Preschool** – The charter school does not have a preschool program.

**Section XI: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding discipline procedures and procedural safeguard rights for potentially disabled students.

**Area(s) of Need:**

**Discipline Procedures** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews with staff and record review that the charter school does not have discipline procedures in place when a student with disabilities is removed from program. In addition, case managers are not notified when a student with disabilities is removed from program nor do they track the number of days of suspension.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure students with disabilities are provided with appropriate services when they are removed from programs for disciplinary reasons. The plan must also include procedures to ensure school administrators, instructional staff and child study team members conduct required activities. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

**Procedural Safeguard Rights for Potentially Disabled Students** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews with staff that potentially disabled students are not provided with services when their removal from program exceeds ten days.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that potentially disabled students are provided with services when a removal exceeds ten days. The plan must include in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.**

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**Section XIII: Graduation**

**Summary of Findings:**

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding graduation requirements.

**Area(s) of Need:**

**Graduation Requirements** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that graduation requirements for students transitioning into high school are not included in the IEP.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that graduation requirements are documented for students who will transition into high school during the course of that IEP. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Section XV: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the charter school accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of access sheets and access/request of records.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding documentation of location of other records and maintenance/destruction of records.

**Area(s) of Need:**

**Documentation of Location of Other Records** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews with staff and record review that central files do not identify the locations of other records maintained by the charter school and the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that central files document the locations of all other files maintained by the charter school and the Middlesex Educational Services Commission.**

**Maintenance/Destruction of Records** - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the charter school has student records that contain information on more than one child. It was also determined through interviews with staff that the charter school does not have a procedure in place to address the appropriate destruction of student records.

- **The charter school will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that student records are appropriately maintained and destroyed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6:3.**

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### **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted at the Greater Brunswick School on February 4-5, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the charter school's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the charter school's improvement plan.

At a focus group meeting attended by three parents and held prior to the monitoring visit, parents expressed their satisfaction with the charter school's programs and services.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the charter school during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included the areas of length of school day/year, certifications, interpreters at meeting, consent, independent evaluations, direct referrals from parents and staff, health summary, referral process/pre-referral interventions, identification meeting participants, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluation, signed/dated reports for students eligible for speech/language services, multi-disciplinary evaluations, nature and scope of evaluations, reevaluation planning meetings/participants, 3-year reevaluation timeline for students eligible for speech/language services, criteria for specific learning disability (SLD), eligibility meeting/participants, IEPs to parents, present levels of educational performance, implementation dates, teacher access, annual review timelines for students eligible for speech/language services, 90-day timelines, alignment of goals and objectives with core curriculum content standards, student invitation, access sheets and access/request of records.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified areas of need regarding policies/procedures, in-service training needs of professional and paraprofessional staff, dissemination of IDEA information, procedures to check hearing aids, extended school year, selection and training of surrogate parents, independent evaluations, provision of written notice within 15-days, content/components of notice, identification meetings, audiometric and vision screenings, functional assessments, screenings in lieu of testing to determine eligibility for speech/language services, copy of evaluation reports to parents 10 days prior to the eligibility conference and teacher responsibility for implementing the IEP.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding the provision/duration of programs, duration/location for speech/language services, facilities, measurable goals and objectives for related services, consent/due process, notices of meetings in native language, child find outreach activities, identification meeting timelines, dated reports, declassification procedures, acceptance/rejection of reports, 3-year reevaluation timeline for students eligible for special education and related services, statement of eligibility for SLD, signatures of agreement/disagreement, annual review timelines, speech/language IEP considerations/required statements, continuum of programs/decision-making process, the transition service needs statement, discipline procedures, procedural safeguard rights for potentially disabled students, graduation requirements, documentation of location of other records and maintenance/destruction of records.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Greater Brunswick Charter School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.

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